Chapter I

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Most of us might feel uncomfortable with a parliament made up entirely of women. But the reverse- the complete dominance of legislatures by men- is actually a reality in some countries. And where men do not completely dominate, they still hold over 90 per cent of parliamentary seats in a wide range of countries. Women are not well represented in politics. When we talk about women's representation in politics, women remain just a “blip on the male political landscape”. The worldwide average percentage of women in national parliament is only 22 per cent¹ according to the list prepared by the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), an international organisation of Parliaments (United Nation) India had never exceeded 12 per cent.

Gender inequality in different spheres of life especially in political sphere has been identified as a very important obstacle to the development of a nation. To overcome such obstacles women's empowerment is indispensable, thus a vital feature for the success of gender equality is the empowerment of women. Women's empowerment is believed to be a dynamic process of individuals as well as collective struggle against the forces which suppress and subordinate women. As per Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Women's equality in power sharing and active participation in decision making, including decision making in political process at all levels will be ensured for the achievement of the goals of Empowerment.

The term 'empowerment' has been widely used in relation to women. Term 'women's welfare', 'uplift', 'development', 'awareness raising', and 'reservation' are some of the term that have proceeded to mean and referred to empowerment. Empowerment as a strategy was basically formulated to bring development of the socio-economic and political status of women, the traditionally underprivileged ones,
in the society. Women in India has always been considered as an instrument of procreation or to be exploited physically and thus, never considered anywhere equal to the males. Though in one hand, the society talks about the respect of women and preach them in the name of Goddesses Saraswati, Lakshmi, Parvati, Kali, etc., on the other hand, the society also abused women in the form of several evils like child-marriage, family infanticide, sexual harassment, and many more. Empowerment of women involves the building up of a society wherein women can breathe without the fear of oppression, exploitation, apprehension, discrimination and the general feeling of persecution which goes with being a woman in a traditionally male dominated structure. In other word, women's empowerment is a much discussed subject and has generally been explained as a process of awareness and capacity building leading to better participation, more decision making power and greater capacity to initiate actions.

Though, a well effort had been made by the chief architect of the Indian constitution, Dr. B.R Ambedkar by enshrining the principle of gender equality in the Indian Constitution, in its Preamble, Fundamental Rights, Fundamental Duties and Directive Principles, but the status of women has remained constant in the past. Of late, there has been an increasing consciousness regarding the status of women which is amply reflected in global debates over the issue of women empowerment. The Mexico Plan of Action (1975), the Nairobi Forward Looking Strategies (1985), the Beijing Declaration as well as the Platform for Action (1995) and the Outcome Document adopted by the UNGA Session on Gender Equality and Development & Peace for the 21st century, titled "Further actions and initiatives to implement the Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action" have been unreservedly endorsed by India for appropriate follow up. From the Fifth Five Year Plan (1974-78) onwards
there has been a marked shift in the approach to women's issues from welfare to development. In recent years, the empowerment of women has been recognized as the central issue in determining the status of women. The National Commission for Women was set up by an Act of Parliament in 1990 to safeguard the rights and legal entitlements of women. India has also ratified various international conventions and human rights instruments committing to secure equal rights of women. Key among them is the ratification of the Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) in 1993.

Placing greater emphasis upon gender discrimination, Human Development Report (1997), prepared by the UNDP gave emphasis on the degree of gender discrimination and believed that gender equality and women empowerment would be achieved through inducting women in the mainstream of development and assuring their access to productive assets and legislation for ensuring them equal social and political status and assuring their participation in political decision-making. Hence, it is believed that greater political participation of women will fulfill the aim of both equality and empowerment of women and also integrate them into the process of development.

Women participation in decision making governance encompasses structural changes in the socio-economic and political situation in order to achieve the prosperity and welfare, which is the ultimate goal of the development. There has been close relationship in between empowerment of women and their participation in decision-making processes. Panchayati Raj Institution is the best way for empowering women. The 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act 1992, is viewed "a revolutionary decision", "a land mark", "a silent revolution", has given a new hope for the women in local decision making governing bodies. The act has reserved one-third of the total
seats for women. It has been assumed that this Act will help in the empowerment of rural women. Political empowerment of women will have multiple impacts on the other sphere of social life. Sustained development of rural India will required rural women’s empowerment and their equal involvement in the decision-making process. In a decentralized federal structure, with growing emphasis on the implementation of various employment and income generating schemes, participation of women in the decision making process at the Panchayat Raj institution level becomes imperative if they are to seek any meaningfully significant gains for themselves, where women have been given representation of 33 per cent, as a sign of political empowerment.

The last decades have witnessed some basic changes in the status and role of women in our society. The Government of India had ushered in the new millennium by declaring the year 2001 as 'Women's Empowerment Year' to focus on a vision 'where women are equal partners like men'. In recent years many steps have been taken so as to increase the participation of women in the political system. The Constitution (108th Amendment) (Women's reservation) Bill, 2010 as approved by Rajya Sabha recently, seeks to reserve as nearly as possible one third of all seats for women in the Lok Sabha, the Lower House of Parliament, and the State Legislative Assemblies including Delhi, however a very sad story as it is repeatedly being scuttled in parliament.

In her message conveying her "heartiest" wishes on the International Women's Day to be celebrated, Meira Kumar² the first woman speaker of the Lok Sabha said: "It is imperative that at this point in our time we prioritize women's empowerment as an intrinsic part of our development agenda and policy." She again refers, "The protection of women's rights and their empowerment is our collective responsibility and the government, social organisations and the civil society in partnership with the
media need to create a congenial atmosphere and shape public opinion so that women have freedom to define and achieve their full potential and live purposeful lives”.

Further, the Constitution (110th Amendment) (Women’s reservation) Bill, 2009 in Panchayat was introduced in Lok Sabha on Nov. 26, 2009 by the then minister of Panchayati Raj, Shri C. P. Joshi to amend Article 243 D of the constitution of India. The Bill seeks to amend the article to enhance the proportion of reservation of women from one-third (33 per cent) to one half (50 per cent) of the total seats in the Panchayats. The provision of seats reservation will also extend to the positions of offices of the chairpersons. However, the bill is still pending in the parliament.

It is important to mention here that, the state of Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Odisha, Rajasthan, Tripura and Uttarakhand have already provided for 50 per cent reservation for women in panchayat through amending their state Panchayati Raj Acts. In most of these state where election were held after on the basis of 50 per cent reservation, the percentage of elected women representatives is more than the stipulated 50 per cent. This reflects ‘social acceptability’ of women leadership in governance at local levels. Once Kofi Annan said, “.....there is no tool for development more effective than the empowerment of women”.

In Arunachal Pradesh, it is on the basis of the recommendation of the chief architect of Arunachal, Dying Ering, that the Panchayat system was introduced as far the–North East Panchayati Raj Regulation, 1967. The North East Panchayati Raj Regulation, 1967 was in force in the state till it was replaced by Arunachal Pradesh Panchayat Raj Act, 1997. Election to Panchayats were held seven (7) times between 1968 and 1992, but the result showed that at the Anchal Samiti level in 1987, there
was only one (1) and in 1992 there were only three (3) female elected representatives. In higher decision making bodies also i.e., Legislative Assembly the women had never exceed 5 (five) per cent in the state.

The Constitution (73rd Amendment) Act, 1992 marks a new era in the federal democratic set-up of the country and provides a constitutional status to the Panchayati Raj Institution. To meet the requirement of the 73rd Amendment Act, the Arunachal Government issued an ordinance (The Arunachal Pradesh Panchayati Raj Ordinance 1994), which later on was renamed as Arunachal Pradesh Panchayat Raj Act 1997. The Act has come into effect from 14th November 2001. It heralds a new opportunity for women to enter into the grassroots politics by providing one third reservations of seats in the Panchayats. In the process of empowerment of women in Arunachal Pradesh in general and East Siang District in particular, encompasses several components viz., social status, awareness, illiteracy, poverty, self-reliance etc.

Hence, the present study, “Empowerment of Women through Panchayati Raj Institution: A Study on East Siang District of Arunachal Pradesh”, examines the process of rural development under women’s leaderships in the decision-making bodies at least at the third tier of the government and also examined the empowerment of women and their problems in the way to achieve empowerment in a larger context.

Conceptual Framework

The word empowerment is formed from two components: *en/em* + *power*. The first element ‘*en*’ or ‘*em*’, is a preposition often used as a prefix on other words. It comes from Latin *in*-, meaning “in, into, towards”. The “in/im” spelling was often used in the past. The “en/em” version comes from the French version of the Latin. The second element, ‘*power*’, comes from Anglo-French *pouer*, *pouair*, which is from Old French *povoir*. This evolved from Latin *potere*, which meant “to be able
to". Thus, according to its etymology, the word empowerment means "enable". The Collins Dictionary defines Empowerment as 'to give ability to,' 'to enable'. The Macmillan Dictionary defines Empowerment as 'to give some one more control over their life or more power to do something'. Empowerment is defined as 'action of empowering, the state of being empowered' by The Oxford English Dictionary. Merriam-Webster defines Empower as "to promote the self-actualization or influence of". He defines synonyms of empower as "accreditation, authorization, delegation, empowerment, license, and mandate". According to Business Dictionary, Empowerment is defined as 'a management practice of sharing information, rewards, and power with employees so that they can take initiative and make decisions to solve problems and improve service and performance'. United Nation defines Empowerment as the processes by which women take control and ownership of their lives through expansion of their choices. The term 'empowerment' itself encloses the word 'power'. The word-empower means 'to give power to' or 'to enable'. Thus, empowerment is the process that enables women to gain access to and control material, intellectual and human resources. Empowerment is the redistribution of Power that challenge patriarchal ideology and male dominance.

Xavier, P. Mao classify power into four types, while studying the changing power structure in traditional tribal societies in North-East India with special reference to the role of women in the context of the current discourse on gender discrimination. He asserts 'the tribal societies in North-East are in no way free from the state and global power structure. The traditional and indigenous powers structure has been exposed into the universal and seemingly impersonal power structure'. The four classifications according to him are- spiritual, political, economic and bureaucratic. In the ancient days persons with spiritual powers were held in high
esteem for giving direction to the society. But today throughout the world political power holds the sway and it holds the key to economic power as well. Bureaucratic power comes next to political power. The political dimension of power has affected the traditional power structure in the tribal society of North-East\textsuperscript{10}.

Kabeer refers ‘My understanding of the notion of empowerment is that it is inescapably bound up with the condition of disempowerment and refers to the processes by which those who have been denied the ability to make choices acquire such ability. In other words, empowerment entails a process of change’. Thus, to him one way of thinking about power is in terms of the ‘ability to make choices’: to be disempowered, therefore, implies to be denied choice\textsuperscript{11}.

Narayan defines empowerment as “expansion of freedom of choice and to shape one’ life, it implies control over resources and decisions”\textsuperscript{12}. According to Petesh and others, ‘by empowerment we mean increasing both the capacity of individuals or groups to make purposeful choices and their capacity to transform these choices into desire actions and outcomes’\textsuperscript{13}.

Different scholars hold different definition of empowerment according to the need of their work. The term ‘empowerment’ has diverse meaning depending on the socio-cultural and political context, and cannot be easily translated in all language. It can be understood as a process, as a product, as an approach or as an aim. Moreover it is multidimensional as it has implications on the individuals, organisational, political, sociological, economic and spiritual levels. It can be understood as a personal process through which the individual takes control of his life or as a political process in which human rights and social justice are guaranteed for a group that has been marginalised from society\textsuperscript{14}. John Snow, Inc. defines empowerment in a behavioural sense as the ability to take effective action. In John Snow’s view, empowerment has various
dimension and manifestations. It encompasses an inner state (sense of self, of one’s autonomy, self-confidence, openness to new ideas, belief in one’s own potential to act effectively), and a person’s status and efficacy in social interactions. In particular, it is the ability to make and carry out significant decisions affecting one’s own life and the lives of others. Kumar define empowerment as “the process—and the result of the process—where by the powerless or less powerful members of the society gain greater access and control over material and knowledge resource, challenging the ideologies of discrimination and subordination. To Boraian, “Empowerment means individuals acquiring the power to think and act freely, exercise choice and fulfil their potential as full and equal members of society.”

Empowerment can be viewed as a means of creating a social environment in which one can take decisions and make choices either individually and collectively for social transformation. It strengthens innate ability by way of acquiring knowledge, power and experience.

According to Phogat and Kumar, empowerment is a process of awareness and capacity building, leading to greater participation in decision-making and power to control and transformative actions. The United Nation High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNHCHR) has define empowerment as the process “of giving people the power, capacities, capabilities and access needed to change their own lives, improve their own communities and influence their own destinations.” Banu refers, empowerment in Indian context stands for transformation of people belonging to weaker segments. To him, the hidden meaning of empowerment is not only political empowerment, but social and cultural empowerment also. In other words empowerment relates to social transformation among the women. The idea of empowerment is thus political, economic, social and cultural. He asserts it would be
erroneous to think that empowerment consists only of political power. It is hope that with the attainment of political power through Panchayati Raj, the women will also acquire economic and socio-cultural power. There are a large number of situations wherein decisions have to be made at the family, caste, village and regional levels. The empowerment given to women would affect all these levels of life.

Empowerment refers to creating capacities in the individuals or groups to participate actively in their own welfare. Theoretically empowerment should be a process that helps to gain control over their lives through raising awareness, taking action and working in order to exercise greater control. Empowerment has several other dimensions like social, economic, psychological and political. Social empowerment connotes formation of social capacities such as health, education, freedom and opportunity for realizing one’s potentialities. Economic empowerment implies entitlement to employment, income, property, productive resources and benefits regardless of gender differences. Psychological empowerment signifies confidence building, acquisition of a sense of efficacy and ability to overcome felling of helplessness. Political empowerment implies equal say in the decision making process in the power structure at all levels from local to global. All this dimension of empowerment are so intertwined with one another that over reliance on one to the neglect of the other are not likely to work.

The 73rd amendment have provides the basis for political empowerment through representation. The policy of political empowerment of women aims at eliciting their active participation in decision-making process in these institutions. Empowerment is a comprehensive term and includes many elements. Feminist and political activists measure women empowerment by economic independence and equality, in political assertion, in being able to live a violence free life and in being able to break social
cultural barriers which keep women in subordinate positions. So, women’s empowerment is a flow rather than a stock variable manifesting into various outcomes and well.

The 1990’s have seen increasing recognition of the centrality of women's empowerment to the success of development programmes. According to United Nations Population Information Network (POPIN)\textsuperscript{23} Women's empowerment have five components:

1. Women's sense of self-worth
2. Their right to have and to determine choices
3. Their right to have access to opportunities and resources
4. Their right to have the power to control their own lives, both within and outside the home and
5. Their ability to influence the direction of social change to create a more just social and economic orders, nationally and internationally.

The concept of women empowerment is clarifies by the Kamla Bhasin\textsuperscript{24} as follows-

1. Identifying knowledge and contribution of women.
2. Helping women to fight against, insecurity, terror and inferiority complex.
3. Making women able to enhance her knowledge and dignity.
4. Making a woman financially independent and strong.
5. Less the workloads at house hold on women.
6. Making a woman capable of controlling and coordinating land and money resources.
7. Assembling women groups and making them resourceful and powerful.
Pandey and Vir view’s empowerment of women involves many things economic opportunities, social equality, and personal rights. To Rajshree women empowerment doesn’t mean giving up of traditional routine household responsibilities. Bhatnagar express her view’s that empowerment of women is largely determined by their economic status in the society. To Tapon, the issue of empowerment of women cannot be isolate from the issue of poverty, violence against women and child abuse.

Human Development Report of Arunachal Pradesh (2006) refers, “the empowerment of women crucially depends upon their participation in the decision-making process. The capability to shape one’s own future through legitimate and participatory processes of decision-making is of intrinsic value in any democratic society.” Participation tends to increased empowerment levels. The strengthening of women’s participation in all spheres of life has become a major issue in the discourse of economic and social development today. Transforming women’ consciousness and building power at grassroots is essential. Thus, with these objectives the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act, 1992 was introduced, to strengthen the democratic decentralization in India and also to enhance the women’s political participation and empowerment by providing reservation of 33 per cent seats.

Empowerment of women in all spheres, in particular the political sphere is crucial for their advancement and the foundation of a gender-equal society. Women’s political empowerment is premised on “three fundamental and non-negotiable principles: (a) The equality between women and men; (b) women’s right to the full development of their potentials; and (c) women’s right to self-representation and self-determination.”
According to the Jakarta Declaration, “Empowerment of women is not only an equity consideration; it was also a necessary precondition for sustainable economic and social development. Involvement of women in the political arena and in decision making roles is an important tool for empowerment as well as monitoring standards of political performance.”

Participation is a means of reducing power differences and is, therefore, contributory to equalization and social justice. According to N.C. Saxena, “empowerment is the result of participation in decision making. An empowered person is one who can take initiative, exert leadership, display confidence, solve new problem, mobilize resource, and undertake new action. Empowerment, it is hypothesized, is an important outcome of high levels of participation involving control over decision making for a range of activities.” Mishra viewed Participation enables women by giving them a sense of their own dignity and values. For women, participation has three roles: educative, integrative and empowering. Women constitute half of the society and belong to all classes and all sections. So, the women’s empowerment is not the question of one section only. It is ultimately the question of the entire society.

The process of empowerment is multi-dimensional and it enables women to realize their full destiny and powers in all sphere of life. A women’s empowerment begins with consciousness-perceptions about herself and her rights, her capabilities and her potentials, awareness of how gender and socio-culture and political force affect her. Political empowerment, economic development and social upliftment of women are necessary and desire to fight myriad forms of patriarchal domination, and discrimination at every stage. In fact, women’s empowerment is central to achievement of the triple goals of equity, development and social justice. In a
democratic system, women participation may be viewed at two levels, (i) awareness and assertion of women political rights and (ii) acquisition and exercise of power.

The National Policy for the Empowerment of Women has formulated the following important objectives to attain the empowerment of the women.

i. Creating an environment through positive economic and social policies for full development of women to enable them to realize their full potential

ii. the *de-jure* and *de-facto* enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedom by women on equal basis with men in all spheres – politic economic, social, cultural and civil

iii. Equal access to participation and decision making of women in social, political and economic life of the nation

iv. Equal access to women to healthcare, quality education at all levels, career and vocational guidance, employment, equal remuneration, occupational health and safety, social security and public office etc.

v. Strengthening legal systems aimed at elimination of all forms of discrimination against women

vi. Changing societal attitudes and community practices by active participation and involvement of both men and women.

vii. Mainstreaming a gender perspective in the development process.

viii. Elimination of discrimination and all forms of violence against women and the girl child; and

ix. Building and strengthening partnerships with civil society, particularly women’s organizations.
The term ‘Panchayati Raj’ literally means "assembly" (avun) of five (panch) wise and respected elders chosen and accepted by the local community. It is the oldest system of local government in the Indian subcontinent. The basic concept of Panchayat Raj is that the villagers should think, decide and act for their own socio-economic interests. According to Banu, the idea behind the Panchayati Raj is the decentralisation of power. The Balwant Rai Committee (1957) was particular that women should find representation in the rural political institutions and recommended that two women should be co-opted in Panchayat Samiti. Ashok Mehta committee Report (1978) maintain that, the involvement of rural women in the developmental process has always been regarded as an integral part of the total developmental of the village community. Narayan views, Panchayati raj institutions are design to bring about rapid development in the countryside with the participation of officials, elected members and rural population. According to Borthakur, “the rural poverty has been decline in recent year largely on account of vigorous and comprehensive roles being played by Panchayati Raj Institutions”. According to Ram, “effective decentralisation by way of empowerment of the Panchayati Raj Institutions is essential to achieve the goal of equitable social and economic development”. Chaudhuri view, that the passing of the seventy-third and seventy-fourth Constitutional Amendment in 1994 has been hailed as a landmark in the evolution of local government in India. According to Patil, “the 73rd Constitutional Amendment opened gates of opportunities in different fronts for women, SCs, and STs to enter into Panchayat Raj administration. Mathew view, women in Panchayati Raj (73rd Constitutional Amendment Act) as a Beginning of a silent revolution. According to, Mani Shankar Aiyar, “I regard, Panchayati Raj Institution is the single most important
and revolutionary development in the country since we proclaimed our constitution in 1950\textsuperscript{47}.

73\textsuperscript{rd} Constitutional Amendment Act, 1992: A brief introduction

In India, the history of Panchayat dates back to the times immemorial. Starting from the Vedic period to the end of the British rule almost every village in the country had a self governing body of its own\textsuperscript{48}. But, the significant impetus to local government was gained from 1857 onwards. From the year 1870, India saw the dawn of representative local institution. A significant impetus to the development of the local government; both at the rural and urban, was given by Mayo’s resolution of 1870, when he passed a resolution by suggesting the decentralization of power and the necessity of associating Indian in administration\textsuperscript{49}.

Moreover, the new rays to local self government date back to the famous resolution by Lord Ripon in 1882\textsuperscript{50}. The resolution of Lord Ripon, who was regarded as the father of local self government in India, had the object of affording ‘further practical development’ to the intention of Lord Mayo’s government and so it can be treated as the Magna Carta of the British empire\textsuperscript{51}. Many efforts in India were made before independence, both by individuals and voluntary association for rural reconstruction\textsuperscript{52}.

We may link-up the emergence of Panchayat Raj system to the vision of Mahatma Gandhi. The father of nation advocated revival of the traditional Panchayat so that Gram Swaraj could become a reality. He viewed Panchayats as an instrument which would ultimately create the basis for the governance of the country. According to Mahatma Gandhi “Independence (Of India) must begin at the bottom…. every village will be republic or PANCHAYAT having full powers…. every village has to be self sustained and capable of managing its affairs”\textsuperscript{53}. 

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Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, the chief architect of the Constitution of India, had expressed himself against the system of village Panchayats. He considered the village as 'a sink of localism', 'a den of ignorance', 'narrow mindedness and communalism'. He had observed, "I am glad that the constitution has discarded the village and adopted the individual as a unit". This was probably because of two contrasting ideas- one from the Father of the Nation, and other of the Father of Indian Constitution, that the state’s responsibility towards organizing village Panchayats was placed under the Directive Principles of State Policy of Indian Constitution. It lacked legal sanction. The Article 40 in the chapter on "Directive Principles of State Policy" states that "The state should take steps to organise village Panchayats and endow them with such power and authority as may be necessary to enable them to function as units of self-government". Article 40 of the constitution is an important authoritative affirmation and impetus for the laws in states under general guidance of union government.

The impact of all these development is seen in the launching of community development programme in 2nd October 1952 to synchronize the birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi. President Rajendra Prasad hailed this programme as "the small seed which will grow into a huge and mighty tree". Jawaharlal Nehru described this programme as "real, solid, constructive work which would bring about a great revolution in a peaceful manner and not by breaking heads and yelling". "Democratic Decentralization" popularly known as 'Panchayati Raj' has historical, ideological and organizational relationship with community development programme. It is a national programme; and covers the entire rural population which comprises over 75 percent of the total population. Since then the development of Panchayats and village life has been undertaken by the state government with the Union
Government's Ministry of Community Development acting as co-coordinator and the major source of funds and initiative. In order for better working of the community development programme a committee was appointed called Balwantrai Mehta committee in January, 1957. The blue print as provided by the Balwantrai Mehta study team, gave motivation to the constituent units of the Indian union to enact necessary legislation to implement the Panchayati Raj system as a form of local self-government. The team suggested a three-tier system of institutional arrangement, namely the village Panchayat, the Panchayats Samiti, and the Zilla Parishad. The scheme recommended by the committee was endorsed by the National Development Council on 12th January, 1958, and thereafter it urged the state to work out structure suitable to its states. Accordingly, the states took action to inaugurate Panchayati Raj through appropriate Act passed by the state legislature. It was in this context that Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru described Panchayats as the 'foundation of democracy' in India. He was of the opinion that the 'progress of our country is bound up with the progress in our village'. In the process, Rajasthan and Andhra Pradesh were the first to adopt the Panchayati Raj in 1959. Later in 1959, Karnataka and Orissa introduced the same in their respective state and other states followed suit.

In order to improve the pace of Panchayati Raj in India, the Janata Government headed by Shri Morarji Desai, set up a new 13 members committee in 1978, to review the working of Panchayati Raj Institution with Ashok Mehta as its chairperson. With 123 recommendations the committee submitted its report in August 1978. In contrast to the Balwant Rai Committee, the Ashok Mehta's Committee recommended two-tiers of institutional arrangement viz, District level and Mandal level. But all these suggestions and recommendations on the whole the performance
of decentralised planning experiments has been rather dismal, barring a few exceptional cases.

The introduction of the Panchayati Raj system in the early sixties must be seen as the first major steps in independent India towards the institution-building process in the context of promoting people's participation in rural development programmes, thus signifying the laying of the foundation of "democratic decentralization". The impact of this measures were however very limited. To make the Panchayats more certainty, continuity and strength further amendment were needed in the constitution of India. Thus, for further improvement in the working of Panchayati Raj Institution, Shri Rajiv Gandhi the then Prime minister of India has appointed G.V.K RAO commission (1985), Dr L.M Singhvi committee 1986, Sarkaria commission (1988).

By the end 1988, P.K. Thongon committee had recommended that the Panchayati Raj bodies should be constitutionally recognized on the basis of the constitution (64th Amendment) Bill drafted and introduced in the Parliament. The 64th Amendment Bill was presented in the Parliament in 1989 in order to make the PRIs powerful bodies. It is probably the first time in the world that a prime Minister has proposed a Constitutional Amendment on a subject like local self-government in federal democracy\(^59\). Rajiv Gandhi said in 1989, when he was introducing the 64th Amendment in the Lok Sabha, that ‘...we may be the world’s largest democracy, but without Panchayati Raj we are also the world’s least representative democracy\(^60\). However the 64th and 65th Amendment Bills were lost in the Rajya Sabha, by three votes in 1989.

On 6th September, 1991, two Constitutional Amendment Bills- 72nd and 73rd were introduced in the Parliament and referred to the joint select committee of the Parliament. The Narsimha Rao government presented the Constitution (72nd}
Amendment) Bill in the Lok Sabha on 22\textsuperscript{nd} Dec. 1992, and the Constitution (73\textsuperscript{rd} Amendment) Bill in the Rajya Sabha on 23\textsuperscript{rd} Dec. 1992. By the time the Parliament passed the two bills, their sequence changed to 73\textsuperscript{rd} and 74\textsuperscript{th} respectively. The President of India gave his assent on 24\textsuperscript{th} April 1993, when it becomes law. They come into force as the Constitutional (Seventy- Third Amendment) Act, 1992 on 20\textsuperscript{th} April, 1993 and Constitutional (Seventy- Fourth Amendment) Act, 1992 on 1 June, 1993\textsuperscript{61}. It was enjoyed upon all the state governments, through Constitutional Amendment in Article 243(M) that, all the state governments should amend their Panchayat Act in conformity with the constitutional provision, as contained in article 243\textsuperscript{62}. The amendment was popularly known as 73\textsuperscript{rd} Constitutional Amendment Act, 1992, which inserted parts IX and containing Article 243 to 243-O of the constitution. The act differs from the Balwant Rai Mehta pattern in two respects. Firstly, earlier panchayat Raj was considered as implementing body with election held on individual basis. Now it is political institution with regular election on party basis. Secondly, it introduced with an objectives to involve the women folk in the local politics by providing 33 per cent seats in all three tiers.

The following are the main features of the Act\textsuperscript{63}:

- **Constitutional status to PRIs (Article 243 B):** A new part IX with the heading ‘Panchayat’ was added to the constitution. Article 243, a new schedule XI, containing 29 powers to be transferred to Panchayats, was added. Thus, the PRIs became an integral part of the constitution.

- **Constitutional status to Gram Sabha (Article 243 A):** Gram Sabha became legal bodies consisting of persons registered in the electoral rolls relating to the village comprised within the area of Panchayat at all village level. It is to be
constituted in each village for exercising all powers and functions at the village level provided to it by the respective state Panchayat Raj Act.

- **Constitution of three-tier Panchayats (Article 243 B and C):** A three-tier Panchayat system shall be constituted in every state. It shall comprise Gram Panchayat at village, Anchal Panchayat at intermediate level and Zilla Panchayat which is apex body at the district level; however a state with population not exceeding twenty lakh may not have the intermediate level Panchayat.

- **Composition of Panchayat (Article 243 C):** Direct election in Panchayat is a distinguishing feature of this act. The person chosen by the direct election from their territorial constituencies shall fit the entire seat in Panchayat. The chairperson at the village level elected in such a manner as the legislature of the state may provide. The chairperson at the intermediate and district level shall be elected by and from amongst the elected members.

Every Panchayat shall remain in office for five year normally. If it dissolved due to any reason before this period is over, election will be held within six month. The reconstituted Panchayat will work for the remaining period of the total of five years.

- **Reservation of seats (Article 243 D):** Seats are reserved in the elected bodies and the executive heads of these institutions for SCs, STs and OBCs in proportion to their respective population in a Panchayat area. Women’s minimum one third reservation to be not only in total seats of a Panchayat or total number of chairpersons at a level but also among those reserved for SC/ST separately. With the 1996 law, all chairpersons to Panchayats in schedule V Area have to be tribal and their members to have fifty percent tribal members.

- **Duration of Panchayats (Article 243 E):** Every Panchayat shall remain in office for five year normally. If it dissolved due to any reason before this period is
over, election will be held within six month. The reconstituted Panchayat will work for the remaining period of the total of five years. If the remainder of such period is less than six month, it shall not be necessary to hold any election under this clause.

- **Disqualification for membership (Article 243 F):** A person disqualified under any law for election to the legislature of the state or under any law of the state shall be disqualified for being chosen as a member of Panchayat.

- **Power, Authority and Responsibilities (Article 243 G):**
  1. The state government would provide the Panchayats with such powers and authority as may be necessary to enable them to function as institutions of self-government through appropriate devolution of powers across all levels of Panchayats.
  2. The devolution of powers to Panchayats shall be in respect to-
     i. The preparation of plans for economic development and social justice
     ii. The implementation of schemes for economic development and social justice as may be entrusted to them including those in relation to the matters listed in the eleventh schedule.
     iii. The state legislature can empower and authorize the Panchayats to levy, collect, and also provide for making grant-in-aid to the Panchayats from the consolidated Fund of the state as per provision under the state Panchayat Raj Act. This provide ability to the Panchayat to discharge its function smoothly with adequate finances at its disposal.

- **Power to impose taxes and Funds (Article 243 H):** The legislature of a state may authorize a Panchayat to levy, collect and appropriate taxes, duties, tolls and fees in accordance with procedures and subject to limits. It may also provide for making grant-in-aid to the Panchayats from the consolidated fund of the state.
Constitution of Finance Commission (Article 243 I): The state government shall appoint a Finance Commission within one year of the commencement of the Constitution Seventy third Amendment Act and then after every five years to review financial position of the Panchayats and make recommendation for its improvement and for principles which should govern distribution between the state and the Panchayat taxes, etc. levied by the state and for grant-in-aid to the Panchayats and determination of taxes, etc. which the Panchayats be authorized to levy and collect

Audit of Accounts (Article 243 J): The legislature of a state may, by law, make provision with respect to the maintenance of accounts by Panchayats and the auditing of such accounts

Election to the Panchayats (243 K): An independent institution called the State Election Commission has been created in each state to conduct Panchayat and municipal elections. All Panchayat membership to be by direct election from territorial constituencies of the Panchayat area i.e. no nomination or co-option etc.

Application to union territories (Article 243 L): The provision of this part shall apply to the union territories or part thereof subject to such exceptions and modifications as specified in the notification by the President of India

Non applicability to certain Areas (243 M): The Act shall not apply to the state of Meghalaya, Mizoram and Nagaland. The legislature of any of these states may by passing a resolution by two-third majority extend to the Act to the state.

The Act shall not apply to the schedule Area and tribal areas mentioned in Article 244 of Indian constitution. The Parliament may, however extend provisions of the Act subject to any exception or modifications to these areas.

The Act shall not apply also to the hill areas in the state of Manipur and hill area of the district of Darjeeling in the state of west Bengal
Continuance of existing laws and Panchayats (Article 243 N): Nothing contained in the existing laws, of the Panchayats in the state shall be applicable if they are in contravention of this Amendment Act. All the state governments shall amend the existing laws accordingly, latest within one year, i.e. by 24th December 1997

Bar to interference by courts in electoral matters (Article 243 O): The delimitation and/or the allotment of seats to constituencies made or purporting to be made under this Act shall not be called in question in any court. The elections to the Panchayats shall not be questioned, except under the provisions as provided in the state Panchayati Raj Act.

Further, the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act, incorporated the XI schedule under Article 243 G, which includes: Agriculture, including agriculture extension; Land improvement, implementation of land reforms, land Consolidation and soil conservation; Minor irrigation, water management and watershed development; Animal husbandry, dairying and poultry; Fisheries; Social forestry and farm forestry; Minor forest produce; Small scale industries, including food processing industries; Khadi, village and cottage industries; Rural housing; Drinking water; Fuel and fodder; Roads culverts, bridge, ferries, waterways and others means of Communication; Rural electrification, including distribution of electricity; Non-conventional energy sources; Poverty alleviation programme; Education, including primary and secondary schools; Technical training and vocational education; Adult and non formal education; Libraries; Cultural activities; Market and fairs; Health and sanitation, including hospitals primary health centres and dispensaries; Family welfare; Women and children development; Social welfare, including welfare of the handicapped and mentally retarded; Welfare of the weaker sections, and in particular, of the schedule
castes and the schedule tribes; Public distribution system; Maintenance of community assets.

The 73\textsuperscript{rd} amendment is viewed as a landmark in the history of Panchayati Raj. So far as it is consider, it is one of the most distinguished acts ever introduced by the law maker. The act directly related to the ‘Empowerment of the Women,’ by introducing 33 per cent of seats for the women. The passing of the 73\textsuperscript{rd} Constitutional amendment Act in 1992 was a landmark in democratic evolution since it gave formal constitutional recognition to local self-government units. Before implementation of reservation of 33 per cent seats for women in Panchayati Raj Institution as provided by the 73\textsuperscript{rd} Constitutional amendment Act, women were not having sufficient access to power position in these vitally important bodies of local governance. Earlier, only few women were getting entry into this institution mostly through co-opted or nominations\textsuperscript{64}.

**Arunachal Pradesh Panchayat Raj Act, 1997**

The state of Arunachal Pradesh did not have representative institution in the state before the introduction of Panchayati Raj. The traditional village councils were the only known self-governing institutions known to the people of this territory. However, these councils were not uniform as they were at different levels of development. Considering these a four member committee popularly known as Ering Committee was constituted on 14\textsuperscript{th} May, 1964, by the then Governor of Assam, to consider the expansion and development of local self-government in NEFA. The committee submitted its report on 4\textsuperscript{th} January 1965, while suggesting the formation of the following bodies- Village level – Gram Panchayat, Circle level – Anchal Samiti, District level – Zilla Parishad and Territory level – Agency council\textsuperscript{65}.
As per the recommendation suggested by the Ering committee, the NEFA Panchayati Raj Regulation 1967 was promulgated by the President of India with effect from 2nd October 1968. The Regulation, 1967, introduced a three-tier Panchayati Raj system in Arunachal Pradesh. The first of these Panchayats were constituted in 1969. The 1967 regulation provided for Gram Panchayats at the village level, Anchal Samiti at the block level and Zilla Parishad at the district level.

There was no provision for reservation for women or for any weaker section of the society, except the provision for nomination of members at Anchal and Zilla Parishad level to secure representation of a tribe who was not otherwise represented in this bodies. The 1967 Panchayat Raj Regulation was subsequently amended in 1970, 1971, 1972, 1994 and 1997. The Amendment in 1970, 1972 and 1994 made minor changes in the Regulation, but in 1971 and 1997 some important changes were brought about in its provision.

The passage of 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act 1992 created a unique situation in Arunachal Pradesh. Among the North East states only the state of Arunachal Pradesh has followed the all India pattern of three tires Panchayats Raj system. In Assam, the three tiers Panchayat system was reduced to two tires jettisoning the middle tier. In Manipur and Tripura only Gram Panchayats are at work. In view of the diverse patterns of Panchayat Institutions in North-East region; the 73rd Constitution Amendment Act, 1992 has provided a special constitutional arrangement under Article 244 that the Act shall not be applicable upon the states of Nagaland, Meghalaya, and Mizoram and hills area of Manipur.

In pursuance to the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act, the Governor of the state of Arunachal Pradesh issued the Arunachal Pradesh Panchayat Raj Ordinance on August 8, 1994. The ordinance provides for a uniform three-tier Panchayati system at
village, intermediate and district level throughout the state. The ordinance also provides for reservation of one-third of members as well as chairpersons to all levels in favour of women, reservation of seats for scheduled castes and scheduled tribes in every Panchayat, a fixed tenure of five years for every Panchayat body, and constitution of states Panchayat election commission and state finance commission to review the financial position of the Panchayats.

The ordinance was sought to be replaced by the Arunachal Pradesh Panchayat Raj bill 1994 passed by the Arunachal Pradesh Legislative Assembly in September 1994. However the bill could not become an Act as the Governor of Arunachal Pradesh reserved it for assent of the President of India. The same bill was returned to the state Government in September, 1996 with the following suggestion:

1) Constitution of Gram Sabha as per Article 243(a) of the constitution;
2) Reservation of seats for scheduled caste as per Article 243 (d) of the constitution; and
3) Direct elections to Panchayat as per the Article 243 (c) of the constitution.

On receipt of the President’s message, the government of Arunachal Pradesh convened an all-party meeting at Itanagar, the state capital, on 18th and 19th Feb. 1997, to discuss the matter in detail with the public and Panchayat leaders. Accordingly, the bill (The Arunachal Pradesh Panchayat Raj Bill 1994) was reintroduced on 6th March, 1997 as “Arunachal Pradesh, Panchayat Raj Bill, 1997”, in the State Assembly and adopted all the modification suggested by the President of India, except the direction relating to reservation of seats for schedule castes and the same was passed by the state Assembly on 6th March, 1997. The State Government maintained that Arunachal Pradesh is 100 percent tribal state and no indigenous schedule castes population inhabits in the state. The central government reserved the bill on issue of reservation.
of seats to schedule castes. However, the Government of India introduced the Constitutional Amendment (86th Amendment Bill, 1999) in the Parliament. It sought exemption of the state from the requirement of reservation for scheduled castes. The relevant clause of Amendment Bill reads, "Nothing in Article 243 (d) relating to reservation of seats for SCs, shall apply to the state of Arunachal Pradesh". The Bill was passed by the Parliament in 2000 and it's became 83rd Constitutional Amendment Act. The Arunachal Pradesh Panchayati Raj Act 1997 was formally notified on 30th April 2001.

Following are the some of the important provision of the Arunachal Pradesh Panchayat Raj Act, 1997-

i. Provision of three tier Panchayati Raj Institution in the state, Gram Panchayat at the Village levels, Anchal Samiti at the Block levels and Zilla Parishad at the District levels.

ii. Direct election of the members of all the three levels of the Panchayats.

iii. Fixation of term for five years for each level of Panchayat.

iv. Election for vacant seats, dissolution and supersession, or midterm shall be held within six months for the remaining periods.

v. Reservation of one-third seats for women at all levels as members and chairman on rotation basis.

vi. Provision of ex-officio members for the concerned member of legislative assembly and Members of Parliament at the Anchal Samiti and Zilla Parishad levels.

vii. Provision for the constitution of a State Election Commission for superintendence, direction and control to election to the Panchayat.
viii. Provision for the constitution of a Finance Commission to review the financial position of the Panchayats at all levels.

The Problem

Arunachal Pradesh being a late entrant into the modern democratic and representative politics, the area of performance of Panchayati Raj Institution in the state has not been sufficiently explored unlike other part of the country. Though some of the works has been carried out in recent, but the main concentration remain on structural aspect. It is also evident from the fact that no analytical study has been conducted towards empowerment of women through Panchayati Raj Institution in the states. Empowerment as an important concept today, it has to be relatively examined through Panchayati Raj, especially in the case of Arunachal Pradesh where women’s position in the society has not been wholly subordinate to male counterparts unlike in other parts of the country. Since the role of Panchayati Raj Institution in empowerment of women has attained paramount importance; it is natural to have in depth study as to whether the objectives of implementation of 33 per cent reservation of seats for women in third tier of the democracy have achieved the goals of women empowerment through having decision-making powers and with lots of role and responsibilities of developmental works. Is reservation merely brought in quantitative change in the gender participation or ushering in qualitative developmental efforts? The study will reflect the true picture of the situation prevalent in tribal societies which may be useful for the policy-makers, administers, planners to consider in their policies and actions and also to find out fresh problems for further research.

Hence, in this study an attempt is being made to inquire into the participation of women representatives in various developmental activities and to examine the problems in participations under Panchayati Raj Institution, their socio-economic and
political background. Further, an attempt has also been made to understand the awareness of the women representatives of Panchayati Raj Institution about various issues relating to them and also to understand the people's perception of women as a panchayat leaders and the concept and issues relating to women empowerment.

**Review of literature**

The gender inequality and underrepresentation of women in politics and now subject to its empowerment through Panchayati Raj Institution has attracted the interest of the scholars resulting into an impressive output of studies on the subject. But, most of the studies on women empowerment give major emphasis on the macro-study of the nation and state level. There are also abundant of literature on empowerment of women through SHGs, Business Enterprises and others formal institution. But, in the context of Arunachal Pradesh, no analytical study has been conducted towards empowerment of women through Panchayati Raj Institution. A scanty works has been done but do not cover the empowerment of women through Panchayati Raj Institution. Therefore, the Present study with main focus to examine the rise of women power and the consequential empowerment through their participation in decision-making process in panchayat Raj is a modest attempt to fill this gap. As such various referred studies have been reviewed which are important, relevant, and concerned with the intension of study. They are as follows.

N. Kabeer in her *Reflections on the Measurement of Women's Empowerment* (2001) critically analyses and discusses how prescribed processes of empowerment may violate the essence of the concept. She reviews and evaluates various measures of women’s empowerment, the values they embody and the appropriateness of these values in capturing the idea of empowerment. Furthermore, she discusses methodological implications flowing from the analysis.
Empowerment of Women in 21st Century (2010) edited by A. Pandey and G. Vir covers entirely on empowerment of women. Here, the eminent scholars have made an attempt to discuss women’s empowerment in present world in general and its impact on people, society and state, in particular. Some of them are related to micro-studies and some others are centered on social and cultural empowerment.

Women and Empowerment: Approaches and Strategies (1998) by S. Sahay discuss the approaches and strategies of empowerment of women by outlining the strategies, mechanism and tools that women are using for their empowerment.

N. Sinha in her Empowerment of Women Through Political participation (2007) critically examines the women’s participation in state and national level. However, the study is restricted to only a regional content of composite Bihar. She stated that women play a marginal role in politics their Political Participation is almost invisible.

M. Thakur in her Women Empowerment Through Panchayat Raj Institution, (2010) examines the role of Panchayati Raj Institution in development and progress of rural women, especially under Bihar Panchayati Raj Act, 2006, which provide 50% reservation to the women in Bihar.

M. P. Boraian in his Empowerment of Rural Women- The Deterrent and Determinants (2008) critically examines the women in India, with special reference to the state of Tamil Nadu. It provides the in-depth analysis of the lives and works of selected rural women. However, the study is limited in the since that it only confine to a particular district called ‘Dindigul’.

K. Saxena in her Empowerment of Women: The Indian context (1994) critically examines the underrepresentation of women in Indian politics especially in Parliament and highlight the women’s movement for civil rights and empowerment.
Empowering the Indian Women (2001) by P. Kapur dealt entirely on women empowerment. She observes that in the last decade the empowerment of women has been recognised as a central issue in determining the situational reality of the women status.

P. Seth in his Women Empowerment and Politics in India (1998) has presented the views of women representatives of various political parties’ right from the first general election to present day and their participation and analysed them.

T. P. Bhatnagar in her Women, Employment and Empowerment (2011) discusses on the empowerment of the women especially through employment. The authors attempt to unravel the intricate relationship between women’s work and their empowerment. She adopted a holistic approach to explore interface between the nature of work performed by women and indicator of their empowerment. More important has been given to the policies and programmes imparted by the government for the women works and empowerment.

Measuring Empowerment: cross-Disciplinary Perspectives (2005) by D. Narayan is an edited book based on proceeding of an international, interdisciplinary workshop on measuring empowerment organised by the World Bank’s Poverty Reduction and Economic Measurement Network in 2003. The book contains the contribution of eminent scholars to understand the poor and empowerment of women. The authors draw from their research and experiences at different levels, from households to communities to nations, in various regions of the world. Measuring Empowerment is an approach to poverty reduction that addresses issues of inequitable power relations.

Another book Tribal Women Empowerment and Gender Issues (2011) by Z. Banu dealt with the issues of empowerment of tribal women especially in the light of
73rd constitutional Amendment Act. The author acknowledges that the amendment has empowered the tribal women. In this book the problem of social stratification in term of gender relations has been taken up by the author.

S. S. Shashi in his *The Tribal Women of India* (1978) gives much emphasis on transition of tribal women of India in general. The book critically discusses the changing context of culture of tribal women, which says- change is the inevitable phenomenon of nature and life. The tribal women have to adopt themselves to the conditions around their environment. It may be rapid or slow, good or bad and complete or partial. Culture itself is never static. Since culture is dynamic, the life of a women or men cannot be static.

*Political and Economic Empowerment of Women through Self-Help Groups: A study of Golaghat District of Assam* (2012) by K. Borah is a doctoral thesis in which she examine the role of self- Help Groups in Political and Economic Empowerment of Women. The author observed that the self- Help Groups has increased the confidence, self- reliance and economically self dependency on the women of the Golaghat district.

K. Jayalakshmi in his *Empowerment of Women in Panchayats: Experience of Andhra Pradesh* (1997) based on the field study conducted in the Nalgonda district of Andhra Pradesh observed that reservation in Panchayat ensures entry for all sections and thus visualizes as the harbinger of equality and social justice. Further, it is found that reservation has merely brought in a quantitative change in the gender participation rather than ushering a qualitative developmental effort.

M. Aiwas, T. Alam and M. Asif in their *Socio-Economic Empowerment of Women: An Indian perspective* (2009) tried to understand the position of the tribal women in India. The author acknowledge that with the implementation of 73rd
Constitutional Amendment Act, the socio-economic condition of the tribal women become more improved and so to say become more empowered. The author also made some suggestion to further strengthen their socio-economic development and to empowerment them.

E. Hust in his *political representation and Empowerment: Women in the Institutions of local Government* (2007) critically examines the women's empowerment through local self government by studying the two different block of two district of Orissa. Balipatna block of Khurda district the forward one and Gania block of Nayagrah district the backward one. The author states that the women in the more forward Balipatna evidently gain more than their colleagues in Gania.

U. Narayan in her *Women in Panchayat: The Path Ahead* (1996) examines the role of 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act in empowering the women. She observed that with the enactment of the Act, women start to participate as a voters, members of political parties over and all became the part of the decision making process.

N. Sinha in his *Women Participation and Involvement in Election* (1991) tries to examine the degree of association between women’s level of political awareness, their political participation and their party identification in Bihar. The author states that the low rate of participation by women in the electoral politics in Bihar has been influenced by several factors, like political conservatism, educational, economic, and social backwardness, the built- in discrimination against women and also due to male chauvinism.

There are plenty of books related to the subject panchayat raj which have been a source of information for a researcher. The books like *Panchayati Raj in Action* (2008) by E. A. Narayana, *Panchayati Raj Reforms in India: Power to the peoples at the grassroots* (2007) edited by D. S. Ram, *Empowering people for prosperity: A*
study in New Panchayati Raj System (2001) by G. Palanithurai, are covered in detail about the Panchayati Raj and their impact on the people especially on women.

Panchayati Raj Institutions and Rural Development (2008) edited by B. C. Boraik and U. C. Sahoo consist of several papers which dealt on deep and intensive study of the impact of 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act. Different scholars tried to examines the empowerment of the women through the PRIs in their papers.

K. K. Singh and S. Ali in their Role of Panchayati Raj Institutions for Rural Development (2001) had dealt in the participation of women in Panchayati Raj Institution in general. They say participation is generally understood as a problem process and not some kind of development. By analyzing the women’s participation in the Panchayati Raj Institution he comments that “mere reservation will not solve the problem unless women members are given commensurate powers to function effectively”.

V. Singh in his Panchayati Raj and Village Development (2003) focused on the role of Panchayati Raj in village development in general. The author also quoted Dr. Zakir Hussein’s thought, in his book while explaining benefits of the Panchayat to the rural people. Dr. Hussein observed, “Panchayati Raj had provided to the rural people large opportunities for taking a share in the formulation and implementation of plans suited to the local conditions”.

R. P. Joshi and G. S. Narwani in their Panchayat Raj in India (2003) scholarly attempted on the philosophy of the Panchayati Raj on one side and growth and development of the Panchayati Raj on the others side. Moreover, they also dealt with the constitutional status of Panchayati Raj Institution and the provision of 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act, 1992. But book has not dealt with any issue on women participation in Panchayati Raj after 73rd Amendment.
G.S. Mehta in his *Participation of Women in the Panchayati Raj System* (2002) covered in detail about the women participation and also outlines few reason for their less participation in panchayat

*Dynamic of Power Relation in Tribal societies of North-East India* (2006) edited by B. D. Ray and A. K. Ray focus on how the traditional power structure in the tribal societies of the Northeast India is changing under the impacts of new economic and social forces and the role of women in this region in the changing context. Moreover, the book also contains some good number of papers related to empowerment of women by the eminent scholars.

*Decentralisation of Power and Rural Development in India, with special reference to North- East India* (2009) edited by A. C. Dutta and A. Chakraborty contain a wide range of papers related to the panchayat and the empowerment of women in the context of their participation in Panchayat Raj Institution with respect to different North-East State.

R. Dawa in his *Women's Participation in Panchayati Raj Institutions: A study on the Monpas of Tawang District of Arunachal Pradesh* (2008) made a scholarly attempt to focus on women participation in Panchayati Raj with emphasis on Monpas. He focuses on the changing scenario of Monpa women after the emergence of the 73rd Amendment Act in general and implementation of Arunachal Pradesh Panchayati Raj Act, 1997 in particular.

M. Modi in his *Indigenous system of Governance in the Tribal Society of Arunachal Pradesh* (2003) covered in details about the socio-cultural as well as evolution of Kebang of Adis. The book also deals with the problems of giving due share to schedule caste under the provision of 73rd Amendment Act and implementation of Arunachal Pradesh Panchayat Raj Act, 1997 after rectification.
Participation of Adi Women in the Panchayati Raj Institution: A case study of Ruksin Sub-Division of East Siang District Arunachal Pradesh (2009) by A. K. Yadav is an unpublished M. Phil. Dissertation, in which he scholarly made an attempt to understand the participation of elected women representatives in various developmental activities under Panchayati Raj Institution in Ruksin Sub- Division of East Siang District.

A. C. Talukder in his Political Transition in the Grassroots in Tribal India (1987) dealt with the political transition of the tribes of Arunachal in general and East Siang district in particular. He also dealt with the traditional village council of the respective tribes of Arunachal Pradesh, side by side the introduction of Panchayati Raj on the basis of the recommendation of the Dying Ering committee. Moreover, the author gives important focuses on the changing scenario in leadership after the emergence of Panchayati Raj in the state.

R. Karlo in his Emerging Pattern of Tribal Leadership in Arunachal Pradesh (2005) dealt on the trend of changing leadership pattern but study is restricted to only Galos tribes of Arunachal Pradesh inhabited in East and West Siang district. In his study he observed that with the introduction of modern polity the leadership pattern has significantly changed in the tribal society. However, he does not dealt on the participation of women in panchayat.

Decentralization, Panchayati Raj and Rural Development: A study of West Siang district (2010) by G. Karbak is a doctoral thesis in which he made an attempt to understand the functioning of the Panchayati Raj Institution in the process of rural development. However, the study does not focus on the participation of women in a way to their empowerment.
S. Dubey in *Dynamic of Tribal Local Polity and Panchayat Raj in Arunachal Pradesh* (2001) has dealt with the institutional framework of Panchayati Raj and focused on the history of Panchayati Raj from Dying Ering committee to present Arunachal Pradesh Panchayati Raj Act, 1997 in the state.


V. Elwin in *Democracy in NEFA* (1965) summarily recorded the existing information on the political institution of different tribes of Arunachal Pradesh. He gives a descriptive account of almost all the tribal village councils along with a discussion on the common features of the councils. While describing the traditional village council of Adis he said “Kebang is the most democratic village council among the tribal village council of Arunachal Pradesh”.

J. N. Chowdhury in *The Tribal Culture and History of Arunachal Pradesh* (1990) have dealt with pre history and early tribal migration, religion, caste and customary law of Arunachal Pradesh. He also focused on the status of women in Arunachal Pradesh in which he divided the view into two opposite part. The first view
holds that women had no soul; in other words she was less than human, almost a freak of nature. The Chinese philosophers identified women with the evil force. The other view extolled women as the source of all primal energy and identified her with the mother earth. Again on the basis of tribes he describes the status of women among some tribes of Arunachal Pradesh.

B. B. Pandey in his *Leadership Pattern in a Tribal Society* (1991) covered the Adis and their political, constitutional and administrative settings, indigenous pattern of political and economic structure and lastly the emergence of Panchayati Raj and its impact in the indigenous pattern of political and economic structure and also the emergence of new leadership. However, he did not give any share in dealing with women in Panchayat.

V. Elwin in *A Philosophy for NEFA* (1959/1988) basically dealt with an introduction part of the then NEFA. The author also discuss in detail about socio-economic feature and geographical location of the five Frontier Division of NEFA-Kameng, Subansiri, Siang, Lohit and Tirap. He described Siang Division inhabited by Adi people as always been proud and independent people. The author also classified the Adis into two main divisions as well as described the Kebang of Adis as more democratic structure.

So, this study is a humble attempt by the researcher to understand the rise of women power and the consequential empowerment through their participation in decision-making process in Panchayat Raj Institution of East Siang District of Arunachal Pradesh.

**Objective of study**

The present study is an attempt to examine the empowerment of women through Panchayati Raj Institution by various issues relating to the implementation of
reservation policy and to understand the nature of work carried out by them. Assessment has also undertaken regarding the nature of their participation in Panchayat meetings and implementation of various developmental programmes of the villages and welfare activities under Panchayats. More specifically, the present study is an attempt to highlight the following basic issues:

1) To analyse the socio- economic and Political profiles of the elected Women members of the Panchayati Raj Institution based on three phases of elections.

2) To understand the awareness of women Panchayat members about the modern politics and wider process of changes.

3) To examine the nature of Women’s Participation within the 3 (three) (2003, 2008 and 2013) phases of Panchayat election with regard to various developmental programmes and also to understand the problem of empowerment through Panchayats.

4) To understand the people’s perceptions on Women Panchayat members and empowerment.

Research question

The following are the research questions in our study:-

1) What is the present scenario of women in Panchayati Raj Institution?

2) What are the levels of awareness of women after elected as panchayat leaders?

3) Is there any change in role and position of the women after the implementation of reservation of seats in Panchayat Raj Institution in the society?

4) What were the obstacles that resisting women as active leaders in PRIs and how to empower themselves?

5) What are the opinion of the general masses towards women panchayat members, panchayat system and empowerment of women through Panchayat Raj Institution?
Universe of the study

The study is confined to three sub-divisions of East Siang District of Arunachal Pradesh. The East Siang District comprises of 4005 sq km with the population of 99,214 is divided into five Sub-Divisions viz – Pasighat, Ruksin, Nari, Boleng and Mebo Sub-Division. However of the five Sub-Divisions, the three Sub-Divisions namely- Pasighat, Ruksin and Mebo have been taken for the present study to cover the whole issues in detail within a fixed time frame. The Pasighat circle constitutes Pasighat Sub-Division. Mebo circle constitutes Mebo Sub-Division. Ruksin sub-division is comprised of three circles- Ruksin, Bilat and Sille-Oyan.

The inhabitants of the area are of mainly Adis. In all villages the modern system of Local Self Government has been implemented. The women were experiencing the reservation given to them in the constitution under the Arunachal Pradesh Panchayat Raj Act, 1997, which framed within the guidelines of the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act, 1992.

The state had already experienced three consecutive panchayat elections, viz. first on April 2003, second on May 2008 and third on May 2013. In our study area that is in East Siang district (three sub-division) in 2003 panchayat election women representatives hold 124 seats in Gram panchayat, 28 seats in Anchal Samiti and 3 (three) seats in Zilla Parishad, while in 2008 panchayat election, women representatives hold 127 seats in Gram panchayat, 29 seats in Anchal Samiti and 2 (two) seats in Zilla Parishad. At recent election that is in 2013, women representatives hold 139 seats in Gram panchayat, 27 seats in Anchal Samiti and 3 (three) seats in Zilla Parishad. For the present study I covered all the elected women ZPMs and ASMs of three consecutive panchayat elections held in the district.
Keeping in time frame of views, I have selected 30 women representatives from each Gram panchayat members from the three consecutive panchayat.

**Methodology**

The present study is mainly empirical through field surveys. The whole research work was based on extensive field works and observations covering the three Sub-Divisions of East Siang District Viz. Ruksin, Pasighat and Mebo. Data for the present study has been mainly collected from field, survey of Panchayats in district concerned. Some data were collected from Government reports and records of Panchayats. Both published and unpublished works were used as secondary data wherever available. Relevant data from internet were also taken for the present study. Information was also collected by interviewing women elected representatives, local intellectuals, officials, village women and knowledgeable persons with the help of specially design and partially structured and unstructured interview, schedule and questionnaire. Conventional technique of the data collection such as structured and unstructured interview, questionnaire and case study was employed.

The size of the sample for the present study consists of 332 respondents, drawn from all 8 (eight) elected women representatives from Zilla Parishad, all 84 elected women representatives from Anchal Samiti and 30 each elected women representative from Gram panchayat (total 90 GPMs) of the three consecutive panchayat elections held in the district, making a total of 182 elected women representatives in three different elections held in 2003, 2008 and 2013 in the district respectively. The selection of total 90 Gram Panchayat members (GPMs) is done on the basis of Purposive Sampling. Moreover, about 30 Panchayat elected male representatives, 30 officials, 30 local villagers, 30 knowledgeable persons, and 30 village women, selected through random sampling have been interviewed to
understand the people’s perception on Women as a Panchayat members, about the panchayat system and empowerment, thus making another 150 respondents.

For the purpose of this study, a Panchayats leader means elected members of Gram Panchayat, Anchal Samiti and Zilla Parishad. An Elected Male Representatives means elected male members of Gram Panchayat, Anchal Samiti and Zilla Parishad. An Elected Women Representatives means elected women members of Gram Panchayat, Anchal Samiti and Zilla Parishad. An official means all officials working in government offices located in East Siang district. A local villager means local peoples of the villages located in East Siang district. A Knowledgeable person means having knowledge of Panchayati raj institution in details. A village woman means women of the village located in East siang district.

The questionnaire-cum-interview schedule has been designed in English for the sake of convenient but was translated into local language wherever needed. The data collected through questionnaire-cum-interview schedule have been tabulated in a coding sheet to have a clear view of the replies of the respondents and figure of calculation for the purpose of analysis. Those data were supplemented by the field notes maintained by the researcher. Further, we adopted simple method of calculation to analyse the data. The fractions below .50 were ignored and above .50 were taken as 1. The percentages are given in the separate rows to compliment the data and for clear and easy understand.

For the purpose of our study, we interviewed 332 respondents. The respondents were divided into two broad categories viz., the elected women panchayats leaders and the general public respondents specially to elicit their opinion regarding women panchayat leaders, panchayat system and empowerment.
Organisation of the study

The study is organised into six chapters including introduction and conclusions

Chapter I: Introduction

This chapter provides an introduction to the conceptual framework of empowerment, women empowerment, Panchayat raj, and introduction of 73rd Amendment Act and framework of Arunachal Pradesh Panchayat Raj Act, 1997, research design and profiles of Arunachal Pradesh and East siang district.

Chapter II: Socio-economic and Political Profiles of Elected Women Representatives of Panchayat Raj Institution

This chapter provides an account of the social, economic and political backgrounds of the elected women representatives of the district.

Chapter III: Awareness of modern Politics and change- Women Panchayat Members

This chapter focuses on the awareness of modern politics and wider process of changes by the women representatives in Panchayat.

Chapter IV: Participation and the problems of empowerment through Panchayat

This chapter measures the extent of elected women representatives’ participation in the various developmental works undertaken by the Panchayati Raj Institution and also examines the problems relating to participation in panchayat. The chapter also dealt with an assessment of the empowerment of women.

Chapter V: Perception towards women Panchayat members, Panchayat system and Empowerment

This chapter focussed on the perception of the respondents regarding the women as a panchayat member, their role in initiating of developmental works in
village, etc. opinion regarding the panchayat system, and also focussed on the empowerment of women through Panchayat Raj Institution

Chapter VI: conclusion

This chapter contain the summaries of the findings of the study by way of conclusions and some suggestions.

The State- Arunachal Pradesh: A Short Profile

Arunachal Pradesh is the land of breathtakingly beautiful sunrises between skyrocketing mountains, sparkling rivers, lakes and ample of snow. The state has the vast expanse of rolling plains, hills and beautiful water bodies at the far eastern edge of India. The state is also known to the people by different name, as the "Land of Dawn Lit Mountains", the "Land of Raising Sun". Moreover the Present name of the state ‘Arunachal Pradesh’ was acquired on 20th January 1972. Originally, it was known as the North- East Frontier (till 1913), North- East Frontier Tract (1914-1953) and North- East Frontier Agency (1954-71). On 20th February 1987, the state became the 24th state of the Indian Union73.

Historical Genesis: The name of the state the Arunachal Pradesh is of recent origin. The word ‘Arunachal’ is combination of two words viz. ‘Arun’ and ‘Anchal’. Arun means Sun or the rising Sun: ‘Anchal’ means border or edge. This province had to go through series of constitutional process and development to acquire the present status, which may be trace back to early second decade of 20th century. The notification issued on 25th September, 1914 (Regulation 2 of 1914) by Government of India, Foreign and Political department has resulted to the birth of the territory which has come to be known as Arunachal Pradesh. This notification extended Assam Frontier Tract Regulation, 1880 to the hill areas of Assam and thus North- East Frontier Tracts
was formed by separating hills areas of the Darrang and Lakhimpur district of province of Assam. The North-East Frontier Tracts was divided into three administrative section viz., the Central Eastern section with headquarter at Sadiya, the Western section with headquarter at Charduar and the Lakhimpur Frontier Tract under Deputy Commissioner of Lakhimpur district of Assam. This division were later redesignated as Sadiya Frontier Tract, Balipara Frontier Tract and Lakhimpur Frontier Tract by the recommendation of Sir Beatsel Ball in 1919. In 1937 the Frontier tracts came collectively to be known as to Excluded Areas of the province of Assam under the provision of section 91 (1) of the 1935 Act. This section was put into force by the Excluded and Partially Excluded Areas order of 1936. In 1943, a new administrative unit called the Tirap Frontier Tract comprising certain areas of the Lakhimpur Frontier Tract and Sadiya Frontier Tract come into existence. In 1954, all these frontier tracts excluding some plains portion which were transferred to the administrative jurisdiction of the Governor of Assam constituted the North East Frontier Tract (NEFT). From 1948, it was placed under direct administration of the union Government and was again divided into Sadiya Frontier Tract, Lakhimpur Frontier Tract, Tirap Frontier Tract, Se La Sub-Agency, Subansiri Frontier Tract and Tuensang Frontier Tract. Each of these regions was administered by a political officer. The Governor of Assam administered the Excluded Areas in his discretion under reaction 92 of the above Act through Political Officer and Deputy Commissioner of Lakhimpur. This administrative arrangement lasted till 1947. The Governor of Assam administered these areas as per India (Provincial Constitution) order of 15th August 1947, on the advice of his cabinet and as per his discretion till 25th January 1950. In the sixth schedule of the constitution, the special provision was made by the constituent Assembly for the administration of these North East Frontier
Tracts. The Governor administered these areas as agent of the President and acted in his discretion as per provision of paragraph 18 of the sixth schedule when our constitution came into effect on 26th January 1950.

In 1954, NEFT was renamed as North East Frontier Agency (NEFA). As per provision of Regulation of 1954, the administrative units were renamed with redefined boundaries as six Frontier Divisions. Thus, they were known as, Kameng Frontier Division, Subansiri Frontier Division, Siang Frontier Division, Lohit Frontier Division, Tirap Frontier Division and Tuensang Frontier Division. In 1957, the Tuensang Frontier Division was excluded from NEFA to join Nagaland. As per North East Frontier agency (Administration) Regulation, 1965, the above Frontier Division was renamed as Districts viz., Kameng District, Subansiri District, Siang District, Lohit District and Tirap District. In 1965, central Home Ministry took over NEFA Administration. NEFA acquired an independent political status of union territory with a new name Arunachal Pradesh on 20th January 1972. Till May 1980, Arunachal consisted of five districts, under the Arunachal Pradesh Reorganisation of District Act 1980. On February 20, 1987, union territory of Arunachal Pradesh was elevated to the position of statehood and become 24th state of Union of India with a 40 member legislative assembly. The strength of legislative assembly was raised to 60 in September 198874. Presently the Arunachal Pradesh has 20 districts.

**Location:** Arunachal Pradesh is lying roughly between the latitude 26° 30' N and 29° 30' N and longitude 91° 30' East and 97° 30' East. It has a long international border with Bhutan to the west (160 km), China to the north and north-east (1,080 km) and Myanmar to the east (440 km). It stretches from snow-capped mountains in the north to the plains of Brahmaputra valley in the south. Arunachal is the largest state area-wise in the north-east region, even larger than Assam which is the most populous.
Itanagar is the capital of Arunachal Pradesh and located at an altitude of 530 meters above MSL. It is named after Itafort meaning fort of bricks built in 14th century A.D.\textsuperscript{75}

**Population:** Scattered over the area of 83,743 sq. Km, the state has population of 13,83,727 of which male and female are 7, 39, 12 and 6, 69, 815 respectively. Of the total population of the state, 22.94 per cent people live in urban regions. The total figure of population living in urban areas is 317,369 of which 167,901 are males and while remaining 149,468 are females. Of the total population of the state, around 77.06 percent live in the villages of rural areas. In actual numbers, males and females were 546,011 and 520,347 respectively. Total population of rural areas of Arunachal Pradesh was 1,066,358. The population growth rate recorded for this decade (2001-2011) was 77.06 per cent.\textsuperscript{76}

**Arunachal Pradesh - Density and sex Ratio:** Density of Arunachal Pradesh is 17 per sq km which is lower than national average 382 per sq km. In 2001, density of Arunachal Pradesh was 13 per sq km, while nation average in 2001 was 324 per sq km.\textsuperscript{77} Sex Ratio in Arunachal Pradesh is 938 i.e. for each 1000 male, which is below national average of 940 as per census 2011. In 2001, the sex ratio of female was 901 per 1000 males in Arunachal Pradesh.\textsuperscript{78}

**Arunachal Pradesh - Literacy Rate:** Literacy rate in Arunachal Pradesh has seen upward trend and is 65.38 per cent as per 2011 population census. Of that, male literacy stands at 72.55 per cent while female literacy is at 53.52 per cent.\textsuperscript{79}
Table 1.1
Literacy rate of Arunachal Pradesh in Comparison with all India since 1951

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No.</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Arunachal Pradesh (%)</th>
<th>All India (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1951</td>
<td>......</td>
<td>18.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>1961</td>
<td>7.23</td>
<td>28.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>1971</td>
<td>11.29</td>
<td>34.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>1981</td>
<td>25.54</td>
<td>43.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>1991</td>
<td>41.59</td>
<td>52.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>54.74</td>
<td>65.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>66.95</td>
<td>74.04</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


**Physiography:** Arunachal Pradesh is characterised by rugged and undulating terrain and is vivisected by innumerable rivers and streams which originate in the higher Himalayas and Arakar ranges. They flow down to from tributaries of the Brahmaputtra. The major rivers are Kameng, Subansiri, Siang, Siyom, Dibang, Lohit, Noa-Dihing and Tirap. Three major climatic zones is recognized on the basis of broad generalisation, viz., the hot and humid sub-tropical area of foot-hills, the cooler and micro-thermal region of lesser Himalayas and the cold Himadri type in the upper region of the state.

**Flora and Fauna:** Arunachal Pradesh is considered as one of the 12 mega diversity (Hot Spots) in the World. The state has 20% species of country’s fauna, 4500 species of flowering plants, 400 species of canes, 25 rhododendron species and more than 500 species of orchids. The important forest species found in the state are tropical, evergreen, semi-evergreen, deciduous, pine, temperate, alpine and grassland etc. The wildlife of the state is rich and varied. Arunachal Pradesh is the happy home of
animals like elephant, tiger, leopard, jungle cat, white browned gibbon, red pandas and musk deer and mithuns.

**Tourism in Arunachal Pradesh:** Arunachal Pradesh is famed for its scenic beauty, though a visitor's permit is required to visit the state from the Tourism Department. Rich in wildlife, with many options for adventure tourism like hiking and trekking, places of interest in Arunachal Pradesh include Tawang, Ziro, Sela Lake, Jawaharlal Nehru Museum and Bomdila with its bamboo bridge overhanging the river among other attractions.

**Inhabitants of Arunachal Pradesh:** Arunachal Pradesh comprise of 25 major tribes and more than 100 sub-tribes. The people in habitating in the state are:

- The Monpas, Mijis, Akas, Khowas, Sherdukepens and Bangnis in Tawang, West Kameng and East Kameng Districts.
- The Adis, Galos, Membas and Khambas, in West, East and Upper Siang Districts.
- Mishmi of three different sects, Khampti and Singhphos in Lohit, Dibang Valley and Lower Dibang Valley Districts.
- Noctes, Wanchos and Tangsas in Tirap and Changlang District.
- Apatanis, Nyishis, Tagins and Hills Miris in Lower and Upper Subansiri Districts.

**Districts and Administration in Arunachal Pradesh:** The Governor is the head of the state who is appointed by the President of the Country. The Chief Minister is the Head of the Government who administered the state, with sixty MLAs, who are directly elected by the peoples. The state has three MPs (2 Lok Sabha and 1 Rajya Sabha) who represented the state in the Parliament. Arunachal Pradesh is divided into 17 districts and each district is administered by a District Collector, an officer from
the Indian Administrative Service, who looks after the administration and smooth running of the district. Because the state is surrounded by international borders, the Indian Army has considerable presence in the area.

Table 1.2
List of Districts in Arunachal Pradesh

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No</th>
<th>District</th>
<th>Headquarters</th>
<th>Population (Census 2011)</th>
<th>Sex Ratio (per 1000)</th>
<th>Average Literacy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Anjaw</td>
<td>Hawai</td>
<td>21,167</td>
<td>839</td>
<td>56.46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Changlang</td>
<td>Changlang</td>
<td>148,226</td>
<td>926</td>
<td>59.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Dibang Valley</td>
<td>Anini</td>
<td>8,004</td>
<td>813</td>
<td>64.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>East Kameng</td>
<td>Seppa</td>
<td>78,690</td>
<td>1029</td>
<td>60.02%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>East Siang</td>
<td>Pasighat</td>
<td>99,214</td>
<td>980</td>
<td>72.54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Kurung Kumei</td>
<td>Koloriang</td>
<td>92,076</td>
<td>1032</td>
<td>48.75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Lohit</td>
<td>Tezu</td>
<td>145,726</td>
<td>912</td>
<td>68.18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Lower Dibang Valley</td>
<td>Anini</td>
<td>54,080</td>
<td>928</td>
<td>69.13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Lower Subansiri</td>
<td>Ziro</td>
<td>83,030</td>
<td>984</td>
<td>74.35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Papum Pare</td>
<td>Yupia</td>
<td>176,573</td>
<td>980</td>
<td>79.95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Tawang</td>
<td>Tawang Town</td>
<td>49,977</td>
<td>714</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Tirap</td>
<td>Khonsa</td>
<td>111,975</td>
<td>944</td>
<td>52.19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Upper Siang</td>
<td>Yingkiong</td>
<td>35,320</td>
<td>889</td>
<td>59.99%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Upper Subansiri</td>
<td>Daporijo</td>
<td>83,448</td>
<td>998</td>
<td>63.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>West Kameng</td>
<td>Bomdila</td>
<td>83,947</td>
<td>819</td>
<td>67.07%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>West Siang</td>
<td>Along</td>
<td>112,274</td>
<td>930</td>
<td>66.46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Longding</td>
<td>Longding</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Namsai</td>
<td>Namsai</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Kara Daadi</td>
<td>Jamin</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Siang</td>
<td>Pangin</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: 1. www.arunachal/pradesh/demografic/eastsiang district map.htm

2. The three new districts are compiled by researcher

Notes: 17. Longding District was created in 2011
18. Namsai District was created on 25th Nov. 2014
19. Kara Daadi District was created on 8th Feb. 2015
20. Siang District was created on 27th Nov. 2015.

The District- East Siang: A short profile

The East Siang District with its Headquarter at Pasighat is a wild mountainous area and present remarkable topographical variety. The Name of the district is derived from the Mighty River Siang that, originating from Tibet, where it is called Tsangpo, transcends down and flows through the entire length of the area until it descends down into the plains of Assam, south of Pasighat town, where it meets Dihang and Lohit and becomes the Brahmaputra. The mighty Siang (Dihang) river which joined the river Brahmaputra in the plain of Assam flows through this district. There are several tributaries of Siang River among which Yanme, Simang and Yambung are worth mentioning. The Adi tribes and its Sub-tribes viz, Minyong, Padam, Pasi etc. are the inhabitants of the district.

Historical genesis: Prior to 1914, the district was part of the Lakhimpur district of Assam. By Government of India notification of 1914, the area covered by this district became a part of the Central and Eastern section of the North-East Frontier Tract. In 1919, this tract was renamed as Sadiya Frontier Tract with Headquarter at Sadiya. In 1948, the Sadiya Frontier Tract was divided into two separate units of administration called the Abors Hills District and the Mishmi Hills District. The office of the Political officer for Abor Hills District was located at Pasighat. The prominence of Pasighat diminished in 1953, when the headquarters of Abor Hills District was shifted to Along. In 1954 when the Frontier Division was created, Pasighat Sub-Division comes under the Siang Frontier Division with the head quarter at Along. But the town regained its importance on 1st April 1961 when
Pasighat Sub-Division became an Independent Frontier Division of North East Frontier Agency, under the charge of an Additional Political Officer. In 1965 the Siang Frontier Division was renamed as the Siang District and the Additional Political Officer was re-designated as Additional Deputy Commissioner. Further, under the provision of Arunachal Pradesh (Reorganisation of Districts) Act, 1980, under schedules III Siang District was divided into East Siang and West Siang with their headquarters at Pasighat and Along, respectively. Again, under the notification No. Land/Legn-13/1994 dated 23rd Nov/1994 East Siang district was bifurcated into two district, East Siang and Upper Siang district\textsuperscript{85}.

**Location:** The district has an area of 4,005 sq. km and is lying approximately between 27.42 to 29.20 North latitude and 94.42 to 95.35 East longitudes\textsuperscript{86}.

**Boundary and Altitude (MSL in meters):** The district has shared its boundary with Upper Siang in North, Dhemaji District of Assam in south, Dibang Valley District in East and West Siang District in west. The altitude of this district varies from 130 meters to 752 Meters. Most of the people inhabit in foot hills and lower belt areas.


**Population:** The district had the population of 99,214 of which 50,116 were male and 49,098 female. In 2001 census, East Siang District had a population of 87,397 of which males were 45,265 and remaining 42,132 were females. Of the total population of the district, 27, 635 peoples’ lives in urban regions, which comprise 27.85 per cent of which males are 13,969 and female, are 13,666. Again of the total population, 71,579 persons live in rural areas of villages which comprise 72.15 per cent of which males and females are 36,147 and 35,432 respectively\textsuperscript{88}.
Figure 1.1
Distribution of population of East Siang District

[Pie chart showing 72.15% Rural and 27.85% Urban]


**East Siang District - Density and Sex Ratio:** The density of the district is 28 people per sq. km. In 2001, it was 24 people per sq. Km. The Sex Ratio of the district is 980 per 1000 male compared to 2001 census figure of 931. The average national sex ratio in India is 940. In 2011 census, child sex ratio is 988 girls per 1000 boys compared to figure of 958 girls per 1000 boys of 2001 census data. Sex Ratio in urban region of the district is 978 females per 1000 males, whereas in rural areas, it is 980 females per 1000 males.

**East Siang district - Literacy Rate:** The literacy rate of East Siang district in 2011 is 72.54 compared to 60.73 of 2001. Of, 72.54 per cent literacy rate, male hold 78.47 per cent while female holds 66.49 per cent. For 2001 census, same figures stood at 68.42 and 52.42 in the district. Total literate in East Siang District were 62,576 of which male and female comprise 34,210 and 28,366 respectively. In actual number 19,512 people are literate in urban region of which 10,516 are male and 8,996 are females. Literacy rate in rural areas of East Siang district is 69.59 per cent as per census data 2011.
Sub-Division and Administration in East Siang District

The East Siang District comprises of 4005 sq km is divided into five Sub-Divisions viz – Pasighat, Ruksin, Nari, Boleng and Mebo Sub-Division. The Pasighat circle constitutes Pasighat Sub-Division. Mebo circle constitutes Mebo Sub-Division. Ruksin sub-division is comprised of three circles- Ruksin, Bilat and Sille-Oyan. The Nari Sub- Division is comprised of three circles viz. Nari, Koyu and New Seren and lastly the Boleng Sub-Division is comprised of four circles viz, Boleng, Pangin, Riga and Rebo-Perving. The Sub- Division and Circle of the district are administered by the following rank of officers given in the table below92.

Table 1.3
Administrative Setup showing District Sub-Division and Circle

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No</th>
<th>Sub-Division</th>
<th>Circle</th>
<th>Year of opening</th>
<th>Rank of officer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>*Pasighat</td>
<td>Pasighat</td>
<td>1911</td>
<td>Deputy Commissioner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>*Mebo</td>
<td>Mebo</td>
<td>1952</td>
<td>Sub-Divisional Officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>*Ruksin</td>
<td>Ruksin</td>
<td>1952</td>
<td>Sub-Divisional Officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Bilat</td>
<td>1990</td>
<td>Circle Officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Sille-Oyan</td>
<td>1990</td>
<td>Circle Officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Nari</td>
<td>Nari</td>
<td>1970</td>
<td>Sub-Divisional Officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Koyu</td>
<td>1990</td>
<td>Circle Officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>New Seren</td>
<td>1997</td>
<td>Circle Officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Boleng</td>
<td>Boleng</td>
<td>1963</td>
<td>Sub-Divisional Officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Pangin</td>
<td>1952</td>
<td>Extra Asst. Commissioner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Riga</td>
<td>1994</td>
<td>Circle Officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Rebo-Perving</td>
<td>1997</td>
<td>Circle Officer</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Note: 1. * marks indicate study area for the present research work.

Distance of administration centers from district headquarter: Ruksin : 35 km, Nari : 75 km, Boleng : 96 km, Mebo : 18 km, Koyu : 33 km, Pangin : 76 km, Riga :
136 km, Bilat: 25 km, New Seren: 97 km, Rebo-Perking: 121 km, and Sille-Oyan: 20°.

The Adi: East Siang district is mostly inhabited by the Adi tribe who belongs to the Tibeto Mongoloid stock. The word ‘Adi’ means hill men. Dr. Tai Nyori writes, “for a long time, the Adis had been known as ‘Abhor’ and by that name they were called also by almost all the writers in the past. But in the recent years the Adis themselves have discarded the appellation ‘Abor’ and have instead wanted that they were called Adi”94. The word ‘Adi’, Verrier Elwin says, “Covers a large numbers of tribal groups, united by a language that in split of dialectical variations is fundamentally everywhere the same, and by a similar culture and temperament”95. Sachin Roy write, “Adis are divided into different groups, such as Padams, Minyongs, Panggis, Shimongs, Ashings, Pasis, Karkos, Boris, Ramos, Pailibos, Milangs, Tangams and Tagins”96. Adis are friendly, hospitable and social, agricultural rather war like and kind hearted97.

Origin: Many writers have tried to trace the origin of the Adis. According to their myth as studied made by them the Adis trace their origin from ‘Tani’ or ‘Donyi’ (the father of the mankind) the son of ‘Pedong –Naane’ the universal mother of all living beings. Therefore, the Adi regard ‘Donyi’ or ‘Polo’ as their common ancestor98. According to Dr. Tai Nyori, there is a slight difference in the myth. These differences are from narrator to narrator, however, they have a common theme99. V. Elwin writes about Donyi-polo that “although this August being does not seen to have created the world, he reigns unchallenged in the heaven, All the Adi groups regarded Donyi-Polo as the great witness in the sky, the upholder of truth. He is the eye of the world; He protects them; he treats them with mercy. Above all, He is the lord of truth and an
oath taken in his name is the most binding of all. Though he is not offered special sacrifices his name is invoked on every ritual occasion.\textsuperscript{100}

**Religion:** The Adis believed in the existence of supernatural beings and innumerable malevolent and benevolent god and goddesses, spirits and deities. The religion of Adis comprehends a rich variety of ideas, beliefs and faith which is profound complex and subtle. Sacrificing animals and birds are their natural practices in the rituals and ceremonies with the help of their priest (*Nyibu*). Moreover, with the emergence of Donyi-Polo as an organised religion the people of the region are widely accepted it. However, the Christianity which was brought by the Britishers has also spread throughout in the society as an important religion.

**Village Council:** The Adis of Arunachal have strong traditional village council which is known as ‘Kebang’. The Gaon Burah (popularly known as Gam) and other village elders play the leading role in the functionary of the Kebang. Popularly there are three type of kebang viz., Baane Kebang, Bango Kebang and Bogum-Bokang Kebang, the apex body of the Kebang. Theoretically every adult women of the village is also a member of the kebang and the presence of a woman in the kebang is not a taboo. They are sometime seen distributing apong or eatables among the deliberating members of the kebang. But women do not normally participate in the kebang. Of Course, occasionally an aggrieved woman comes to the kebang to voice her grievances or when a woman feels it necessary, she does not hesitate to make her voice heard and her opinion felt in the kebang. General participation of a woman in the proceeding of a kebang, however, is extremely rare and in many villages non-participation by women in the kebang has become a ‘niyom’ (rule). As change is ubiquitous, now Adi society accepted the head of the village as women, in common parlance, ‘Gaon Buri’.
Women: The position of women in Adi society is respectable though the society is patriarchal. The women are respected and treated as equal in the society. The women has got separate role in the family and society. In field also her roles are more important in sowing, weeding and reaping. Women became an integral part of the Adi society, without which society will stagnant. Her roles in the festivals, village affairs, community works, are quite appreciable. They performed dances and songs (ponung) occasionally. T. Mibang writes, “modern education has greatly improved the women status. Many educated girls are working as officers, doctors, teachers, nurses and clerks. In the changed circumstances among the tribes, educated and employed wife is being considered as an asset.

Occupation: Agriculture with jhum and wet rice cultivation is the main occupation of the Adi societies. However, now a day’s people of the region are well equipped to manage their livelihood in other alternatives works. The fishing, hunting, crafting and weaving are also important occupation of the Adi peoples.
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